

PURE AIR AND CLEAN STREETS EXHIBIT

Lack of proper methods of street cleansing and of the removal of waste detracts from the appearance of the city and invites negligence on the part of the public. It carries in its trend more important consequences than unsightliness and the pollution of our bay waters. The open garbage can is a feeding place for insects and rodents, and thereby contributes indirectly to the transmission of many diseases, of which flies, vermin and rats are carriers. Improper sweeping results in filling the air with dust, as does the practice of dumping ash cans into open carts. Other deleterious elements in the air we breathe in the city are: the carbon monoxide from the exhaust of automobiles and the smoke and soot which come from the chimneys of buildings and from stacks of boats plying in the city waters, as well as the mineral dust that comes from building operations, the tearing up of streets, the cleaning of buildings by sand blasting, and other similar sources.

The New York Meteorological Bureau in New York City measures daily the amount of dust suspended in the air, and it was found that over the Central Park Area, which is probably one of the most favored areas in the city, the amount of dust and soot suspended averaged 3.97 tons per cubic mile of air, during 1930. On moist days this suspension creates a pall which deprives the city of much sunlight and, particularly, of ultra-violet rays. Aside from the injury to our eyes and to air passages which the impurities of the air create, the amount of economic loss caused, directly or indirectly, is considerable. A great deal of coal and oil is being wasted by improper combustion, and the destruction of fabrics and household effects runs into hundreds of millions annually, according to the estimates made. As has been well said, excessive smoke is not a necessity but a luxury of laziness and indifference.

It is not only for the purpose of impressing on the public mind the menace to health of impure air and dirty streets that an exhibit will be held at the New York Academy of Medicine, under the joint auspices of the Academy Committee on Public Health Relations and the Committee of Twenty on Outdoor Cleanliness. It is being arranged primarily as an educational measure to stress the possibility of preventing this nuisance as well as health hazard. The exhibit, which will be open to the public, will begin January 12th, 1932, and continue for eight days. It will consist not only of graphs, charts, photographs, as well as various scientific instruments of precision used in measuring contamination, but principally of models of modern street cleaning apparatus, stoking devices, ventilating machines, and moving pictures depicting modern methods. In this endeavor the coöperation of the city, state and federal authorities is being enlisted, as well as that of scientific organizations and of the manufacturers of proper equipment.